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1981 projections

Small gains are expected for Convention statistics

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Statistical projects in nine key program and interest areas of Southern Baptist life predict smaller gains—along with two decreases—than in last year's banner totals.

All nine areas increased in 1980 for the first time since 1961.

Increases are predicted this year in enrollments in church membership, Sunday School, church music, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood, plus mission expenditures and total receipts. Baptisms will be down from last year and Church Training is projected to have a small loss.

Baptisms are predicted to decrease from 1980 by 6.9 percent, or 29,652, to a total of 400,090, topping the 400,000 plateau for only the 10th time, according to projections made by the research services department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The projections are based on reports from 23,899 Southern Baptist churches across the nation. The final statistical count, which will be completed in February of 1982, will be based on Uniform Church Letters submitted by some 36,000 churches. The final figures also will include the total number of churches participating in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The projections may differ slightly from the final figures because of normal statistical sampling error, but they are expected to be very close to the final report.

Mission expenditures and total receipts are expected to increase by 10.8 and 11.0 percent, respectively. Expenditures increase of \$43,361,947 is second only to last year's record increase of more than \$45 million. Totals of mission expenditures have risen significantly in the last three years over figures from the middle 1970s when the amount was consistently between \$18 and \$27 million.

Total receipts are predicted to increase by more than \$273 million to a total of \$2,756,846,561. This is a record dollar increase for receipts, but not a record percentage gain.

The church membership gain of 1.2 percent will push the estimated 1981 total to 13,770,090, an increase of more than 163,000. This percentage gain is one of the smallest ever made in church membership. The smallest increase on record was in 1978, which was 0.9 percent.

Program areas which are projected to increase include Sunday School, the largest Southern Baptist program, with a gain of more than 59,000, or 0.8 percent, bringing that total to 7,492,872. It is the second consecutive gain for Sunday School enrollment.

The program of church music is projected to have the largest percentage gain, with 3.3 percent, or 50,404, to a total of 1,577,801.

The 2.5 percent estimated gain for

Missionaries in Libya make decision to leave

TRIPOLI, Libya (BF)—Southern Baptists' only missionary family in Libya has decided to leave as urged by the American government.

Harold and Dorothy Amos Blankenship, from Tennessee and Alabama, reported by telephone Dec. 14 that their departure would be dependent on when exit visas are approved. Unless they are able to get their residence visa renewed, they will be required to leave by Dec. 21, but they hope to stay until the first week in January in order to spend Christmas with members of their church. They are planning a Christmas luncheon in their home.

The Blankenships plan to transfer to another middle eastern country when they leave Libya.

"We count on the prayers of people back home," said Mrs. Blankenship, adding that everything was normal and quiet in Libya. Her husband had reported earlier that about 50 people, a normal crowd, attended regular services of the English-language Baptist church in Tripoli Friday, Dec. 11. The church, which he serves as pastor, meets on Friday because that is the Moslem holy day when offices and businesses close.

Mobil Oil Co. people were leaving Dec. 14, said Mrs. Blankenship. But some companies had decided to stay in Libya and others had not yet made a decision.

The Blankenships, the first Southern Baptist missionaries to work in Libya, have worked primarily with Americans living there. The English-language Baptist church was or-

ganized by a group of American oil company employees and military personnel three years before they arrived in 1965. American military personnel pulled out of the country in 1970, but American oil company personnel have remained.

The youngest of the couple's three children, Franklin, 14, is in Libya with them.

Leake calls

missions director

Leake County Baptists have called Henry Adams as director of Missions. W. C. Smith is retiring at the end of 1981 after serving as Leake director of missions 11 years.

Adams assumes duties January 1982. He is a native Leake County, ordained by Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, and has served churches in Leake, Neshoba, and Newton Counties.

He leaves Calvary Baptist Church in Newton after serving over five years as its pastor. He is a graduate of Clarke College, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary. Adams and his wife Magdalene have four children, Cathie (Griffith), Jimmie Gayle (Nazary), Angie (Smith), and George. They are moving to 504 Dorrell St., Carthage.

Brotherhood enrollment is significant

because it puts the enrollment back over the half-million mark for the first time since 1964. The increase of 12,392 is the third consecutive year for a Brotherhood increase.

Women's Missionary Union enroll-

ment is predicted to increase by 0.9 percent, or 9,900, to a new total of 1,109,943. This will be the second increase in a row for WMU, following three years of losses.

Enrollment in church training is projected to drop by 0.6 percent or

10,774, to a new total of 1,784,845. Last year Southern Baptists' training program experienced a gain of more than 40,000. (Charts on page 2)

(The Sunday School Board has two Jim Lowrys. One in communications. This writer works in research.)



Prayer time continued until nearly midnight. Glenn Sheppard, standing at far right, is special assistant in Spiritual Awakening, Evangelism Section, Home Mission Board. Kneeling, second from left, is Arthur Blessitt, speaker on Friday evening. (More pictures are on page 3.)

"Spiritual awakening -- is necessary if we survive"

By Anne McWilliams

Four hundred seventy-seven from 14 states registered for the Mid-South Regional Conference on Prayer for Spiritual Awakening held Dec. 10-12 at Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Jackson. Local people swelled the night attendance to 750 or 800. Fifty-two association in the state were represented, and 120 churches.

"I am convinced that our major problem today is that we are handling the Word of God rather than the Word of God handling us," Jim Hylton told his audience on Friday afternoon. "Most people cannot have revival because they are trying to have revival. Revival only comes from God. It is a gift of God. . . . If you have Christ, then you already have revival in you." Hylton, pastor of Lake County Baptist Church, Fort Worth, stressed the importance, too, of confession—not only confession of sins, but confession "of what God has done for us through his mighty works of grace."

Other speakers included Glenn Sheppard, Charles Culpepper, Jack Taylor, Lewis Drummond, Robert Coleman, and Arthur Blessitt. Tapes of all the messages are available from Wayne Long Taping Service, Box 145, Lambert, MS 38643.

The conference was sponsored by

the Evangelism Section of the Home Mission Board, SBC, and the Evangelism department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Similar conferences had been held at Glorieta and Ridgecrest, but this was the first regional conference of its type.

Guy Henderson, director of evangelism, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, said, "I think this conference was one that was needed for us to keep our priorities before us as to what should come first in our churches and ministry. A spiritual awakening—however it comes—is necessary if we survive."

No Record next week

The staff of the Baptist Record wishes all of you a Christmas of true giving and one that will bring warm memories.

The next issue of the Record will be dated Jan. 7, 1982. The issue of Dec. 31 will be skipped to conform to the paper's postal agreement which calls for 50 issues per year.

Mississippians appointed to Foreign Mission Board



The Conerlys



The Pettys

A Ridgeland pastor, his wife, a nurse, and a Philadelphia high school teacher and his wife are among missionaries appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Five couples and one single adult have Mississippi ties in the December appointment to foreign service.

Rodrick and Caroline Conerly of Ridgeland will go to Lima, Peru where he will be a general evangelist. She plans work in a well baby clinic as a volunteer.

Tom and Robbie Pettey of Philadelphia will work in Nigeria where he will be a seminary maintenance worker. This is a renewable four year term for the Pettys.

Conerly, until appointment, has been pastor of Trace Ridge Baptist Church and she has been a nurse at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

He was born in Osyka and is a graduate of Mississippi College. He earned master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from New Orleans Seminary.

Conerly served as pastor of Mt. Vernon Church, Liberty; and of churches in Holden and Olla, La. Caroline Powell Conerly, who considers Osyka her hometown, is a graduate of the University of Mississippi Medical Center and is a registered nurse.

The Conerlys have two children: Gary Wayne, born in 1971; and Julia Ann, born in 1975.

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"What gift can I give?"

By Mrs. Fred Henderson

Gifts . . . Oh, such fun to shop for others, especially at this time of the year. Each year, after Christmas, I pledge within my own heart to shop EARLY for Christmas next year. How many of us make this same promise each new year? But, I still wait until the season is well under way to shop. I think it is because I really like the hustle, the crowds, the decisions of that time of the year.

A question comes to mind often within my spiritual being. What gift can I give to God. Because He gave the greatest Gift ever given in His Son Jesus. I often wonder what I, as a saved individual, can give Him in return. The answer is always — Give yourself away.

Wouldn't it be great to add to our list for holiday giving emotional gifts. They cost nothing, but are the most precious presents you can give to your friends and family.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The ONLY gift is a portion of one's self." And that's what these 12 gifts are—gifts of you. They cost nothing, but their effects can last a lifetime.

Add these to your list next year and shop EARLY.

THE GIFT OF TIME—In our busy world, the phrase "I don't have time" has become a universal complaint. A chat on the phone to an unhappy friend, or a visit to an uncle who lives alone can mean a lot, but cost very little. Relationships between people are like growing plants: it can

(Continued on page 2)



"Christmas in the Cottonpatch"

This is a scene from Christmas in the Cottonpatch, a sight and sound program depicting the life of Christ. The program is shown in a former cottonpatch (now it grows soybeans) on Highway 5 between Hickory Flat and Ashland, at 8 p.m., Dec. 18-27. (Picture by Mrs. E. A. Autry, widow of the former pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church.)

High school students can't meet to pray

By Stan Hasty

WASHINGTON (BP)—A group of high school students seeking to hold prayer meetings at their upstate New York school lost their legal battle here as the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review two lower federal court rulings against the students.

The action, taken unanimously and announced without comment, came just one week after a major ruling that students at state colleges and universities have a constitutional right to worship on campus. In writing for an 8-1 court majority in that case, however, Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr. warned that the decision should not be

interpreted as signaling a similar result in the New York case.

Six students at the Guildford, N. Y., High School took their principal, superintendent of schools and school board to court nearly three years ago after principal Charles Ciacio and the board refused to grant them permission to conduct prayer meetings inside the school either before or after the school day.

But twice, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York and at the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, the students lost. They asked the Supreme Court last year to hear their appeal, claiming that the court of appeals decision "ignores the fundamental right of millions of students to be free of governmental control of their associations and the free flow of ideas."

They also claimed that in the use of school property for religious purposes, "a high school, during non-school hours, is identical to a college or university."

By rejecting those claims, the Supreme Court let stand the October 1980 court of appeals ruling which held in part that school officials had a "compelling state interest" in refusing the students' request. Sanctioning the prayer meetings, the lower court ruled, would have violated the no establishment of religion clause of the First Amendment "by creating an unconstitutional link between church and state."

Further, the Circuit Court of Appeals held in its unanimous ruling, "the prayer meetings would create an improper appearance of official support, and the prohibition against impermissibly advancing religion would be violated."

School officials were further justified in denying the request, the ruling went on, in that they would have been forced to monitor the student group to insure safety and order, and "more importantly . . . to guarantee that participation in the prayer meetings would always remain voluntary."

Unlike the Dec. 8 Supreme Court decision holding that religious groups on college campuses have a constitutional right of free access to a public forum, the court of appeals held that "a high school is not a 'public forum' where religious views can be freely aired."

(Continued on page 2)



A. C. Johnson

Retirement is old hat to Johnson

By Don McGregor

A. C. Johnson, who was president of Clarke College when the machinery for merging it with Mississippi College began to operate, will "retire" (again) on Dec. 31.

Johnson was called out of retirement to spend 4½ years at Clarke, beginning as a classroom teacher. He had retired after a career in public education. During his first year at Clarke he was appointed director of development and then became president on the resignation of the former president, S. L. Harris.

Since the merger operation got under way with this school semester, Johnson has been involved in development at Mississippi College. His plans for the immediate future still do not give much of a hint of retirement. He will continue as the coordinator for a 10-county area for the Brotherhood Department. He is also the Brotherhood director for the Lauderdale Baptist Association. He lives in Meridian, where he has maintained a home for several years. He has served as moderator of the Lauderdale Association for two occasions.

While Johnson, a school man, is a layman, he says he is often looked upon as a preacher and fills the pulpit in churches regularly. This activity he also plans to continue.

In addition, he has been engaged to teach part-time at Meridian Junior College, beginning in January.

During his years in public education

(Continued on page 2)

Bennett of SBC visits China with evangelicals

WHEATON, Ill.—Ten evangelical church leaders from the United States visited Bishop K. H. Ting, chairman of the Three-Self Protestant Movement and the newly-formed Chinese Christian Council, in Nanjing, China on Nov. 19, 1981. The contact was initiated by the National Association of Evangelicals, an interchurch agency of evangelical denominations and churches.

The group included Harold Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, and Donald Patterson, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Miss.

Following an extended visit with

Bishop Ting in which he shared the conditions and development of the Church in China, Billy A. Melvin, NAE Executive Director and leader of the group stated: "This initial contact was significant in building bridges of understanding between the churches in China and the evangelical churches of America."

The group shared with Ting the growth of the evangelical churches in the U.S. during the past 30 years and expressed a desire for open dialogue and communication with the churches in China for the purpose of mutual understanding and informed prayer support.

An NAE statement regarding the

churches of China was shared with Ting which, in part, said: "We affirm our sincere love for all the Chinese people. We wish them well as they seek the progress and development of their homeland. We pray for China's Christians as we ask them to pray for us."

Ting expressed appreciation for the visit of the NAE group and the prayers of Christians in America. He said that 200 churches had been re-opened in China since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and that there were more than one million Christians, approximately 80 percent of whom worship in house meetings.

He further emphasized the need for pastoral care and indicated that the Nanjing Theological Seminary had re-opened in March 1981 after being closed for 13 years. There are presently 51 students in training. The seminary also serves as the religious studies department of Nanjing University.

A magazine with a circulation of 30,000 is published monthly to provide help and guidance for leaders in the Three-Self Churches and those churches meeting in houses. In 1980, 50,000 copies of the New Testament and 85,000 copies of the entire Bible were published by Chinese Christians for use in the churches. This year (1981) the number of Bibles published will double.

Others sharing in this contact with Bishop Ting were Henry Dick, moderator, General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches; Arthur Gay, first vice president of NAE and pastor, South Park Church, Park Ridge, Ill.; Louis King, secretary of NAE and president, Christian and Missionary Alliance; Warren Magnuson, general secretary, Baptist General Conference; Tom McDill, president, Evangelical Free Church of America; Robert McIntyre, second vice-president of NAE and general superintendent, The Wesleyan Church; and Frank Smith, chairman, Pentecostal Fellowship of North America.

Texas pastors sign telegram to Brezhnev opposing imprisonment

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Forty-five Tarrant Baptist Association pastors have signed a telegram asking Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev to release three Baptist pastors from Soviet prison where Georgi Vins says they are being held.

Vins, former Russian Baptist pastor exiled to the United States in 1979, told a meeting of the association's pastors conference that American Christians support their counterparts in Russia

very little. Far more effective, he said, are the efforts of American Jews for their Russian counterparts.

After Vins' familiar recitation of persecution in the Soviet Union, Charles Wade, pastor of Arlington's First Baptist Church, said he was going to send a telegram to Brezhnev. Forty-four joined him asking that Pyotr Rumachik, Yakov Skorniyakov, and Dimitri Miniyakov, all ill, be treated humanely and immediately released.

"It may not have any effect," said

Wade. "But we wanted Brezhnev to know that here are 45 real people who pastor real churches who know about the situation and are offended by it."

Vins said they were imprisoned because of their evangelistic efforts, as are 122 other Baptist leaders. Vins, speaking through an interpreter, said American Christians do not realize the religious persecution suffered by Soviet Baptists.

"American tourists are shown churches that are full, and are told there is religious freedom," Vins said in an interview for "MasterControl," a Southern Baptist radio program aired on 895 stations. "But the atheistic Soviet Government has been carrying on a cruel warfare against the church of Jesus Christ for 64 years."

Vins, 52, said he appreciated the help Baptists in the United States give Russian Baptists, but he believes they could do more. He urges letter-writing to Soviet officials asking for the release of religious prisoners. He credits that kind of pressure with helping obtain his release.

"American Jews do a lot to defend Russian Jews, but what are American Baptists doing about persecuted Baptists?" he asked.

Vins conducts his own efforts through the International Representation for the Council of Evangelical Baptist Churches of the Soviet Union, Inc.—a non-profit organization he heads in Elkhart, Ind. In addition to his speaking, those efforts include supplying Soviet Christians with Bibles and religious books, writing Soviet leaders and writing letters of support to prisoners and their families.

1981 SBC statistics are moderate, mixed

Estimated 1981 SBC Statistics

	Estimated 1980-81 Percent Change	Estimated 1980-81 Numerical Change	Estimated 1981 Total
Baptism	-6.9	-29,652	400,090
Church Membership	1.2	163,282	13,770,090
Ongoing Sunday School Enrollment	0.8	59,467	7,492,872
Church Training Enrollment	-0.6	-10,774	1,784,845
Ongoing Church Music Enrollment	3.3	50,404	1,577,801
Ongoing WMU Enrollment	0.9	9,900	1,109,943
Ongoing Brotherhood Enrollment	2.5	12,392	508,058
Mission Expenditures	10.8	\$43,361,947	\$444,861,453
Total Receipts	11.0	\$273,201,010	\$276,846,561

The projections in seven areas for Mississippi Baptists are shown below; As is the case with the national statistics, the official report will be made in February. Enrollment is reported to be up in all organizational categories in Mississippi, but a decline of 7 percent is expected in baptisms. This is about even with the national experience. Nationally a decline is expected in Church Training. Mississippi is showing an increase in that area.

Department	Enrollment 1980	Enrollment 1981	Difference
Sunday School	341,213	342,709	+1,496
Church Training	129,033	130,824	+1,791
Church Music	91,116	93,561	+2,445
Brotherhood	25,603	26,485	+882
WMU	51,643	53,318	+1,675
Church Membership	620,205	628,056	+7,851
Baptisms	17,680	16,392	-1,288

HMB elects three to staff, three national consultants

ATLANTA (BP)—In a string of personnel actions, the executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board elected three staff members and three national consultants, and accepted with "deep regret" the resignation of HMB Evangelism Vice President C. B. Hogue.

Hogue, the board's director of evangelism for eight and a half years,

Retirement is old hat

(Continued from page 1)

Johnson obtained a law degree from the University of Alabama. Education continued to claim his attention, however, and he never got around to pursuing a law career.

He started out as principal and teacher in a two-teacher school in Mississippi. He went from there to become a Mississippi high school principal and then spent three years in Alabama as a high school principal. His next move was to Meridian Junior College as director of adult education and from there he went to the University of Southern Mississippi for 13 years. Then he entered retirement for the first time.

Johnson is a graduate of East Central Junior College at Decatur and earned the bachelor of science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. He holds the master of arts degree from the University of Mississippi and the bachelor of laws and juris doctor degrees from the University of Alabama. He also holds the doctor of humane letters from the London Institute of Applied Research.

He went to Clarke in 1977 as chairperson of the division of social science and business and instructor in history and government. He became director of development in 1978.

Johnson said on the eve of his retirement that he sees the merger of Clarke and Mississippi College in a very positive way. "I believe it will prove beneficial to the Baptist educational program in Mississippi. I believe we will see an increase in the student body in another year," he said.

He added that he is grateful for having had the opportunity of serving at Clarke College. "It was a hard time for a good bit of the time," he said, "but I had some wonderful experiences."

Oldest SBC missionary

NEW YORK (BP)—Lelah C. Morgan, Southern Baptists' oldest retired foreign missionary, got a nationally televised birthday greeting Nov. 18.

Willard Scott, ebullient weatherman on "The Today Show," the NBC morning news telecast, congratulated Morgan on her 103rd birthday that day, and noted her 27 years of missionary service in China (1905-1932).

resigned effective Jan. 15 to become pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla., returning to the state where he was evangelism director before joining the HMB staff.

Two other Home Mission Board staff members were transferred to newly-created positions.

E. Warren Woolf, director of the personnel division for the past 10 years, was named to a new position as national consultant for student work under the department of special mission ministries. Woolf was director of that department from 1966-71, and previously was director of the Baptist Student Union at Georgia Tech in Atlanta for 15 years. As a consultant, Woolf will work out of his home in Atlanta.

Mrs. Katherine Roberson, director of personnel employment services in the HMB personnel division, was transferred to a new position as director of marketing services in the promotion department, effective Feb. 1.

Two new staff members from Alabama and New Mexico were elected by the board.

Kenneth Chadwick, language missions director for the Baptist Convention of New Mexico since 1975, was elected to a new position as assistant director for ethnic church growth in the language missions division, effective Jan. 1. A native of Arkansas reared in California, Chadwick is a former home missionary in New Mexico and former pastor of Spanish-speaking churches in California.

Jack Washington, director of Christian social ministries for Birmingham Baptist Association in Alabama since 1974, was elected a researcher in the

research division, effective Jan. 1.

In addition to Woolf, national consultants were named in the evangelism section and rural-urban missions department.

Dale Holloway, Sr., supervisor of elementary education for the Mississippi Department of Education, Jackson, Miss., and bivocational pastor of Day Star Baptist Church, Florence, Miss., was named national consultant on bivocational ministries for the rural-urban missions department, succeeding the late J. T. Burdine, Sr. Holloway will assume the position Feb. 1, continuing to live in Florence, Miss.

Dean Finley, campus minister for Campbellsville College, Campbellsville, Ky., was named national consultant for youth evangelism, succeeding Dave Bennett.

In addition to filling the six national staff and consultant positions, HMB directors approved a contract with the SBC Stewardship Commission to work with the HMB church loans division in conducting a fund-raising campaign to raise \$10 million for new mission churches built as part of Bold Mission Thrust efforts.

The board also approved wording of a clause in church loan contracts which requires churches which receive loans from the HMB to be "in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention," and giving a legal definition of that phrase. The clause gives the HMB the right to accelerate the maturity of the debt or to foreclose on the loan if a church with an existing loan is "disfellowshipped" by the association, state convention or SBC.

Drama festival set Feb. 26-27

A Drama Festival "Visions of Truth" will be held February 26-27, 1982 at the First Baptist Church, Hattiesburg. The event is a learning experience in religious drama.

Sponsored by the Mississippi Church Training Department, the festival will feature an introduction to drama, acting, directing, puppets, clowning, combining music and drama, pantomime, musical drama, and improvisation.

Learning will be achieved in three dimensions: classes, performance and observation of performances.

Groups wishing to perform can contact Robin Nichols, church recreation consultant, Mississippi Baptist Convention, Box 530, Jackson, Miss. 39205, or phone 988-8888 before February 19, 1982. Performing groups will be held to a 10 minute limit.

Mississippians

(Continued from page 1)

Petty is a graduate of Mississippi College and earned the master of arts degree from Columbia University Teachers College in New York. He also attended Southwestern Seminary. He has been a teacher in Neshoba County, a teacher and principal in Philadelphia, principal in Tunica and was superintendent of schools in Drew.

Robbie Beall Petty was born in Philadelphia, as was her husband and attended Mississippi College.

The Pettys have two grown children.

Carolyn J. Phillips will serve in Mexico as a nurse. She has lived in Russell, Miss., and recently worked as a nurse at Madison County General Hospital in Canton, Miss.

Samuel and Connie Davis Stallings will work in the Philippines where he will be a general evangelist. He has been pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Hernando, Miss., and she once lived in Senobia.

Frederick and Deborah Rush Davis will work in Japan where he will be a general evangelist. Mrs. Davis was born in Laurel, Miss.

Arthur and Sandra Brown Hixon will work in Hong Kong where he will be a mass communications specialist. He has worked as a production and duplication supervisor in Jackson, Miss.

What gift can I give?

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thrive only if it receives care. For both plants and people profit from a simple tonic that I call "tincture of time."

THE GIFT OF A GOOD EXAMPLE—Most people learn attitudes and behavior by observing others. Whether we want to admit it or not, each one of us is an example, be it good, bad or so-so. When we find ourselves in a situation where we can be either loud and pushy or display calm assertiveness, which should we choose? To give the gift of good example we must give a good example to follow, a good lesson in the mature way. We will find that the calm way to handle a situation will be rewarded.

THE GIFT OF ACCEPTANCE—Many relationships between people become problems when one person tries to change the other to fit preconceived notions. We may try to help change a person's bad habit by nagging or being unpleasant ourselves. But, did you know that people begin to shed bad habits once they are accepted the way they are? We can never give the gift of acceptance until we learn to accept ourselves first.

THE GIFT OF SEEING THE BEST IN PEOPLE—When we expect people to respond in a positive way, they usually do. But we must let those we love know that we expect the positive. When we search for the best in people, somehow all the things we might dislike will fade away.

THE GIFT OF GIVING UP A BAD HABIT—All of us have habits that annoy those people around us. What a great gift it would be if we could give up an unhappy or unhealthy habit for those we love. Breaking a habit can be a lonely task. It may seem almost impossible to do but whatever habit you choose to break, the people who love you will be there when you need help.

THE GIFT OF PRIVACY—Too often we tend to smother those we love with questions and demands on their time. It has been difficult for me not to ask questions and make demands from my two older children but I realize that each of us has a need for privacy. It is often difficult to relinquish some of our curiosity and give those we love the right to private thoughts and unshared feelings but it can be done... and what a nice gift of you to give.

THE GIFT OF SELF-ESTEEM—Unwanted or unnecessary advice given to those we love is a temptation hard to resist, especially if we think it will help those we love. Such advice may cripple a person's self-esteem. An old Chinese proverb proclaims "There's nothing more blessed on earth than a mother (I add, and father) but there's nothing more blessed in Heaven than a mother (or father) who knows when to let go the hand."

THE GIFT OF SELF-DISCLOSURE—Most relationships will either grow or become stale. Self-disclosure—letting someone else discover more about you—can turn a declining relationship into a flourishing one. It can also help sustain an already healthy friendship. If we bottle up our feelings, hurts and hopes it deprives others of truly knowing who we are.

THE GIFT OF TEACHING—Sharing our talents with others is a good way to show our love. It is a great gift to give. Helping someone you love learn something new is an important investment in their happiness. My husband takes time to show our little son the fundamentals of baseball. Not only do they have fun, but our son learns a sport. Most importantly his father teaches lessons in good character that will enrich our little boy's life for the future. We are all teachers to teachers or ministers to ministers.

THE GIFT OF LISTENING—In an effort to be noticed, few of us know how to listen effectively. Often we interrupt or act disinterested when someone else is talking. We begin to tell our own stories before the other person has finished. There is an art to being a good listener and to hear a story until finished or to listen to an excuse or explanation is always a great gift to give someone. It makes us a more understanding person.

THE GIFT OF FUN—Have you known people who seem always to "wet blanket" the happiness of those around them, while others lead people into finding fun even in ordinary events? To give the gift of fun we must place ourselves in the category of being a fun-loving person.

THE GIFT OF LETTING OTHERS GIVE—Does this sound like a strange gift to give? There are people who insist on being the giver rather than the receiver. Insecurity causes some people to act this way. When we let others give to us, and when we accept their gifts in a gracious manner, we may be giving them one of the most important gifts of all. The joy you feel in giving is felt by others as well.

Perhaps at the reading of this article all your gifts are purchased and wrapped and placed under the tree or mailed to friends and family. Add these twelve gifts now to your Christmas Season and give them all year long. May the Spirit of Christmas remain in our hearts all year and the quiet joy of Christmas be ours forever. MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Mrs. Fred Henderson lives in Brandon.

Propsts will go to Haiti

Boyd and Myrlene Propst of Pearl have joined Orphans, Inc., a Cocoa, Fla.-based ministry which operates an orphanage, school and nutrition center in Haiti.

The two, members of McLaurin Heights Baptist Church in Pearl, will be living in Cocoa beginning in May, 1982, when their youngest child finishes high school.

A church mission trip to Haiti to work with Orphans, Inc., was what prompted the Propsts to apply for mission service. McLaurin Heights church sent 17 people to Haiti—including an optometrist and carpenters who helped put a second story on a school building. Pastor Curtis Williams preached in the outback and taught for national pastors, mostly Baptist.

Health restrictions following open heart surgery on Boyd prevented the Propsts from being approved as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries. Following volunteer service with the Home Mission Board in the inner city of Houston, Tex., the Propsts decided home missions was too great a stress for Boyd's heart condition.

In the meantime, the Propsts are planning a mission trip to Haiti and need volunteers. The trip is Feb. 12-26.

The group will finish a school building floor. The Propsts may be reached at 939-3146 in Pearl.

Students can't meet to pray

(Continued from page 1)

The decision concluded: "We must be careful that our public schools, where fundamental values are imparted to our children, are not perceived as institutions that encourage the adoption of any sect or religious ideology."

By refusing to review the lower rulings, the Supreme Court technically did not endorse their findings but for reasons it chose not to disclose decided the time was not right for review of the issue.

Its action apparently means that the high court will avoid, at least for the time being, a major public flap over the sensitive issue of religion in the public school classroom such as that which followed its landmark 1982 and 1983 rulings that states may not require religious devotions in the schools.

(Hastley writes for the Baptist Joint Committee.)

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FMB wants new legislation prohibiting CIA encroachment

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board urged legislation to prohibit the CIA from encroaching on foreign missions, took action to upgrade inadequate retirement for Southern Baptist missionaries, and completed a record year in missionaries appointed for overseas service.

In other action at its December meeting, the board reaffirmed a previous decision on dealing with the disability of Mission Service Corps volunteer Robert Sorrels, approved Texas pastor Clyde Fant as president of the Baptist Theological Seminary, Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and released \$679,406 to assist in world hunger and relief projects in nine countries.

The board authorized its president, R. Keith Parks, to write appropriate U.S. officials urging legislation which prohibits Central Intelligence Agency agents from posing as missionaries, using a mission operation as a front, or gathering intelligence through existing missionaries.

The action reaffirms past positions the board has taken to express opposition to any kind of CIA involvement in missions.

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, informed Parks that an internal CIA regulation prohibiting the use of missionaries to obtain information for the CIA still stands. But Dunn said no stated restriction prohibits a CIA agent from posing as a missionary or using a "missionary front."

President Reagan signed an executive order Dec. 4 which generally loosened restrictions on the U.S. intelligence community but made no reference to use of clergy or missionaries. Baptist leaders fear that loosening of restraints eventually may lead to the undermining of American missionary operations overseas, although they knew of no current problem in that area. The Foreign Mission Board takes a strong non-political stance and prohibits involvement by its mis-

sionary personnel with intelligence-gathering organizations.

Parks, chief executive officer of the Baptist agency which sends 3,149 missionaries to 96 countries, said omission of regulations to prevent the CIA from using a missionary cover is "morally wrong and potentially endangers the lives of missionaries in some countries."

The upgraded pension plan brings board pension contributions to career and associate missionaries in line with the 10 percent minimum of annual compensation recommended by the SBC Annuity Board for personnel of Southern Baptist churches and organizations. It will increase costs of the board's pension contribution for missionaries from \$1.2 million per year in 1981 to \$3.7 million per year in 1982.

The new plan eliminates a low retirement income ceiling which reached a maximum of only \$480 per month for an emeritus missionary couple and dropped off sharply for those retiring under age 65 in the old plan. It also includes upgrading of retirement benefits for many missionaries who have previously retired or resigned, and it improves long-term disability and death benefits for career and associate missionaries.

The board appointed 62 new missionary personnel at a service at Manassas (Va.) Baptist Church and approved reappointment of seven former missionaries.

The appointments brought the 1981 total to 355, exceeding the record 350 set in 1978. The total includes a record 44 general evangelists and a record 208 career appointments. The top previous career total was 181 in 1978. Last year 139 career personnel were appointed.

Parks said reaffirmation of a previous decision not to provide long-term assistance to Sorrels came after "much prayerful consideration and concern" for the 30-year-old former Mission Service Corps volunteer. Sorrels was paralyzed in an automobile accident which killed a missionary

and a Nigerian Baptist leader one week after Sorrels arrived in Nigeria in 1980.

The board reviewed its earlier decision to assist Sorrels only through October 1982 when government disability benefits normally would take effect, because a group called "Friends of Bob Sorrels" urged the board to reconsider.

The board's action on Fant, pastor of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, followed similar actions by the Ruschlikon seminary's executive board and the European Baptist Federation Council. Fant, 47, would assume the post after successful completion of applications he and his wife are making to the Foreign Mission Board to become missionary associates.

Commitment extended
In a related action, the board extended a five-year commitment, made in 1978, to help support the seminary, to 10 years beginning when the new president takes office. The board also voted to continue to increase its subsidy to the seminary, which will total \$315,000 in 1982, by \$5,000 each year, "with growing support from Europeans anticipated."

Besides a variety of actions to assist world hunger projects and emphasize evangelism and church development around the world, the board honored two individuals and appropriated additional funds for the Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso.

The board presented plaques of recognition to board member Charles Tope of Oklahoma City, who will return to the mission field in Kenya with his wife, and Ralph West, retiring after serving the board for 36 years—20 years as a missionary in Nigeria and 16 years on the stateside staff, the last five as liaison to the Home Mission Board for volunteers.

The board allocated \$200,000 to establish a capitalization fund for the Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso to assist its rapidly increasing distribution of literature to 70 nations, and another \$82,361 for construction of a new building.



Prayer groups were a major part of the conference. One layman said that in his small prayer group, a young minister told of his discouragement and his thoughts of leaving the ministry, but during the prayer meeting recommitted his life, to begin again. One woman on Saturday morning told conference participants that her home had been falling apart, but as a result of this prayer time she felt she would be able to work out her problem.



Rosalie Mills Appleby of Canton, retired missionary to Brazil, and Charles Culpepper of Memphis, retired missionary to China, got together for lunch at Colonial Heights. Both have written books and/or articles on prayer and spiritual awakening. Culpepper is author of the book, THE SHANTUNG REVIVAL, and talked on that topic Thursday evening.

RA pavilion fundraising encouraged by Brotherhood

By Paul Harrell, director
Mississippi Brotherhood Department

Every Royal Ambassador Chapter in our state is encouraged to participate in the funding project for the outdoor chapel at Central Hills Baptist Retreat. Walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, collecting aluminum cans, scrap metal, paper and other such projects can be meaningful ways to involve boys in this significant mission project.

Associational Royal Ambassador leaders are making contacts with church Royal Ambassador leaders urging an all out response. Monies collected should be sent to the Brotherhood Department, designated for the outdoor chapel.

A camp t-shirt will be given to each boy who contributes \$25.00 or more to the goal. Also, a \$25 scholarship for each boy (up to 10) will be applied to 1982 Royal Ambassador Camp expense for the chapter that contributes the most money. (This will be figured per chapter member, to give all chapters an equal opportunity.)

It is exciting to know that through the use of the outdoor chapel a meaningful contribution will be made to every person attending Royal Ambassador Camp.

Old, new covenants celebrated

People of God's covenants gathered at First Baptist Church, Tupelo recently to celebrate and interpret the bonds of the heritage common to all—Jew, Roman Catholic, and Protestant.

The "Peace on Earth" concert consisted of Hanukkah and Christmas music plus interpretations from ministers representing the three groups.

Phyllis Harper of the Tupelo Daily Journal reported in her column, that Jack Cristil of the Temple B'Nai Israel prayed Hanukkah prayers in Hebrew and in English as he lighted the Menorah "then told the story of Mattheias and his sons the Maccabees—and that first record in history of a battle for religious freedom."

The miracle of the oil that kept the lights burning the eight days of the first Hanukkah was told in song by the Tupelo Community Chorale in the "Feast of Lights."

Mike Gunter of St. James Roman Catholic Church introduced and explained the "Ave Maria" and "O Magnum Mysterium."

And Bill Rittenhouse, pastor of First Baptist, introduced the Protestant music and folk carols. He read the 98th Psalm and "explained that the salvation of the world was the Baby born in a stable in Bethlehem whose birthday we commemorated with our Christmas celebrations," said Harper.

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State conventions consider the three Bs of Baptists

By Dan Martin

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—For the most part, messengers to the 34 conventions of Southern Baptists stuck with the "Three Bs" of Baptists during recently completed annual meetings.

The "Three Bs" are baptisms, budgets, and buildings.

Generally, the "spirit of Los Angeles" prevailed during the meetings, although brush fires did break out here and there.

Several observers compared the state meetings to the 1981 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Los Angeles, which was supposed to be a schismatic shootout, but ended up in general harmony.

During the meetings, messengers adopted record budgets, and set aside record amounts to support the worldwide mission efforts of Southern Baptists.

Only one convention—the District of Columbia Convention—decreased its national Cooperative Program gifts, dropping 1.45 percent.

Of the others, 21 increased the percentage of their gifts and 12 retained the same percentage as last year.

Cooperative Program gifts were the focus of action in the meeting of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Messengers approved by a hefty margin a proposal to make gifts through the Cooperative Program the sole basis for messenger qualification.

The margin to approve the measure was 712 to 238. Last year, a similar proposal received a majority vote, but failed by only 15 votes to reach the required two-thirds.

"Infringes"

The action led one pastor, Arthur B. Ballard, of Old Forest Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, to tell conventioners the vote infringes on the autonomy of his church, and that he intended to "lead" the church out of the BGAV.

Little of the smoke from the pre-Los Angeles controversy remained, if state convention elections are any indication.

Two states—Virginia and North Carolina—elected leaders from the "moderate" faction which emerged before Los Angeles. But the elections of Frank Campbell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Statesville, as president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and Vernon Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church of Alexandria, to lead the BGAV, did not draw theological discussion.

Both Campbell and Davis were allied with the faction which opposed a "political inerrancy" philosophy aimed at taking control of the denomination.

In Alabama, two key figures in the doctrinal dispute—Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, and James Auchmuty, pastor of Shades Crest Baptist Church of

Birmingham—were nominated for president.

The two drew national denominational attention when Auchmuty was "bumped" from a second term as a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board when his theology was questioned. Wolfe was nominated by the Committee on Boards to replace him. SBC messengers, however, restored Auchmuty to his trusteeship.

In Alabama, neither man was elected. Messengers favored Harrell R. Cushing, pastor of First Baptist Church of Gadsden, for president.

Doctrinal controversy over membership and baptismal practices was rumored in three states, but emerged in only one meeting.

Rumors

Rumors abounded there would be efforts in both Kentucky and Arkansas to exclude the messengers of churches which accept transfer members who have been baptized by methods other than immersion. In neither state did the issue arise.

In South Carolina, messengers rejected a constitutional change which would have excluded messengers from such churches.

For the most part, resolutions opposed such traditional Baptist targets as alcohol use, pornography and convenience abortions. Two states—

Texas and Oklahoma—resolved against the Equal Rights Amendment. Several mentioned arms control, and three—California, Florida and North Carolina—specifically opposed tuition tax credits.

In Virginia, messengers accepted the abortion policy of the Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg, a topic which caused controversy during the 1980 meeting. The vote was not on abortion, but on whether the hospital had satisfied a 1978 convention request that the hospital establish a policy on abortion.

In North Carolina, messengers approved the sale of the Baptist Building in Raleigh, which had been the subject of considerable controversy in the spring. Messengers honored J. Marse Grant, who had opposed the move, and who has announced he will retire as editor of the Biblical Recorder in September of 1982.

South Carolinians elected Ray Rust, president of Anderson College in Anderson, S.C., as executive director-elect, and honored Harold Cole, who will retire from the post.

In Arkansas, memorial services were held in memory of Huber L. Drumwright Jr., the executive director who suffered a fatal heart attack November 2.

(Martin is BP news editor.)

Conference leaders note lack of Bible knowledge

By Tim Nicholas

Two of the speakers at a recent Preaching Conference reminded the 73 participants that most people who hear sermons do not know a great deal about the Bible.

The conference, sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department and held at Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg, drew primarily pastors to hear Earl Guinn, James Heflin, and Harold Bryson.

Guinn, senior professor of Christian preaching at Southern Seminary, said "the average citizen is biblically illiterate."

Heflin, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, said that among worshipers, "there is a general lack of knowledge of the Bible."

This lack of knowledge makes the study habits of the preacher even more important than if the hearers were well versed in Scriptures, according to the speakers.

Harold Bryson, associate professor of preaching at New Orleans Seminary, told participants that preaching "is not necessarily a study experience, it is a total involvement." That also includes emotional preparation: "En-

ter into the worship," said Bryson, "participate in singing."

Guinn intimated that communicating the Gospel is itself hard work. "Those who contend the Gospel is simple are themselves simple." It involves "the most profound truths that will ever engage the mental energies of mankind," he said.

He added, "it takes an inverted form of genius to take a thing as glorious as the Gospel and make it dull."

Guinn also cautioned preachers to remember that their congregations are heterogeneous mixtures from "children to gray hairs," and the preachers have to make sure they are communicating their message clearly. "The preacher is the only one who has been able to reflect on the message an entire week," said Guinn. "With the congregations, it's a moving train and they're going to have to swing aboard at any point."

J. M. Wood, minister of music for Jackson's Broadmoor church, led music for the conference. "Joyful Sounds," a singing group of four couples from the church, gave a special concert.

Love is the fairest flower that blooms in the garden of God.

Prayer meet tells of changes



Iris Urey, right, gave her testimony on Friday evening. Miss Urey is a Mission Service Corps volunteer working with the Prayer for Spiritual Awakening Ministries of the Home Mission Board. She told of serving an eight-year prison sentence for pushing drugs, and of how the warden and others witnessed to her, and how she became a Christian. When she sang following her testimony, the listeners gave her a standing ovation.

Youth confab set Dec. 28-29

The 1981 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference is set for Dec. 28-29, at Clinton's Mississippi College coliseum. Participants may register at the door if they have not had a chance to pre-register. Registration begins at 1 p.m. The program begins at 2 p.m.

Nazareth, Israel—A new science laboratory at the Baptist School in Nazareth, Israel, will honor Subhe Jacky, the school's science teacher who died this year.

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MINISTERIAL ALUMNI of Blue Mountain College have named the first two recipients of the James L. Travis Scholarship: Ronald Meeks, second from left, a junior at Blue Mountain and Don Puck, second from right, a sophomore.

The Travis Scholarship program was established in April 1980 in honor of James Travis, left, Professor of Biblical Studies at BMC. Scholarships are granted from the endowed fund annually to qualified Southern Baptist ministers preparing for ministry in a Southern Baptist church or agency. E. Harold Fisher, BMC president, is at right. Ronald is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Meeks of Corinth and his home church is Oakland Baptist. He is majoring in Bible and English and is a President's list scholar. Don is the son of Major and Mrs. Robert Puck of Jacksonville, Ark. His majors are Bible and history and he is associate pastor of First Baptist Church, Fulton, Miss.



BYW was organized at Main Street Baptist Church, Hattiesburg recently. In attendance were, back row, Karin Bolton; Mary Hope Camp, mission support chm.; Paula Grady, BYW director; Barbara Price; Julie Carney; Barbara Stephenson; Mary Ann Mordica; Cathy Strickland, mission action chm.; Ann McNider, president; Mary Anne McCall, mission study chm. Front row, Tami Evans; Pat Cress; Rose Windham; Sandra Wiggs, mission support chm.; and Pam Anderson, secretary. Missionaries who have spoken to this group are Elaine Perrill, Thailand, and Janie Boykin, journeyman, Liberia. Helen Falls, professor of missions at New Orleans Seminary, will speak to them in January.

Names in the News

Kenneth H. Pope, vice-president for development and public relations at Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., is the new advancement vice president at Campbellsville College.

Pope worked as a letter carrier for the United States Post Office in Jackson, Miss. from 1955 to 1961; as a graduate assistant at the University of Mississippi from 1961 to 1962; as a mathematics instructor for Hannibal-LaGrange from 1962 to 1964, and a graduate assistant at the University of Missouri-Columbia from 1964 to 1965. He is also a graduate of Mississippi College.

A native of Clarke County, Miss., Pope is married to Dorothy Fay Touchstone Pope.

Blue Mountain students recently selected to Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, 1981-82, are Nancy Hopps, Memphis, Tenn.; Anne Brownlee, Myrtle; Maria Bell, Memphis; Pam Randle, Amory; Gwyn Wise, Ackerman; Lisa Lineberger, Ripley; and Pam Barnett, Winona.



Crumpton

Harmony Baptist Church, Union County, near New Albany, recently licensed **Billy Crumpton** to the Christian ministry. He is available for any type of church services, states Mike Smith, the Harmony pastor.

Frank Edmondson, Jr., has been licensed to preach by Calvary Church, Columbus. He is available for either pulpit supply or interim pastorate, and may be contacted at 327-5463. His address is 110 King Street, Columbus, MS 39701.

Missionary News

Ronald and Sue Ballard, missionaries to Paraguay, have returned to the States for medical leave (address Rt. 8, Box 54, Meridian, Miss. 39301). He was born in East Saint Louis, Ill., and she is from DeWitt, Ark.

Danny Stampey, missionary to Ghana, has arrived in the States for furlough (address: c/o Mrs. O. L. Stampey, Benton, Miss. 39040), her hometown. She was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1961.

Mark and Cecile Alexander, missionaries to Argentina, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: P. O. Box 530, Jackson, Miss. 39205). He is a native of Norfolk, Va., and she is the former Cecile Price of Corinth, Miss.

Antonina Canzoneri, missionary to the Bahamas, has arrived in the States for furlough (address: 5939 Clinton Blvd., Jackson, Miss. 39209). Born in Fort Worth, Texas, she grew up in Jackson, Miss.

Roger and Beverly Swann, missionaries to Tanzania, are in the States on furlough (address: 416 Ford St., Columbia, Miss. 39429).

Revelation class

Ray Robbins, senior professor of religion at Mississippi College is teaching a night course on the Book of Revelation for 15 weeks beginning Jan. 4, 1982.

The course will be for college credit or for non-credit and will cost \$60. The class will meet on campus in the Provine Chapel, Room 103, 6-8:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings.

For more information, call the Division of Continuing Education at 924-9766 or 924-5131, ext. 225 or 301.

Sunflower Association "M" Night was held at Second Baptist Church, Indianola, with J. C. Mitchell, director of Golden Triangle Missions, as guest speaker. A record crowd attended. Second Baptist, Indianola received the Attendance Banner. Linn Baptist, Doddsville received the Efficiency Banner with 68% of overall enrollment present.

Melissa Winters of Second Baptist, Indianola was crowned "M" Night Queen and Michelle Shaffer of Linn Baptist, Doddsville was crowned "Church Training" Queen. Rome Baptist was awarded a certificate for having the highest percentage increase in Church Training this year. Sonny Redwine is Church Training Director for the association.

The WMU members of **Richburg Baptist Church**, Hattiesburg, held their foreign mission study, *The Way to Timbuktu*, Nov. 17. On display were items of African art; jewelry, ivory, wood carvings, pottery, and costumes from French West Africa. A meal of "ground nut stew," rice and fresh fruit salads was served. Doris Miller, study leader, was assisted by Lillian Sellers, Bonita Paddock, and Erma Baggett. W.M.U. director is Helen Walker. R. A. Miley is pastor.

Calvary Baptist Church, Oak Grove hosted the Lamar County "M" night on Nov. 16. Highlights included presentation of awards to Bellevue Church for doctrine, and study course (Curley Cole Church Training director). Richburg Church, Lewis Webster, director, and Oloh Church, Dianne Dale, director, tied for highest attendance. (Richburg had the highest percentage of enrollment attending.) Both churches received awards. Calvary Church, Mark Davion, director, received the growth award. In the association, 519 of 1040 enrolled received study course certificates last year.

Bible drill procedure was demonstrated by Bellevue youth and the "Sunshine" puppets under direction of Mark Russell presented a skit on "Disciple Life."

Douglas E. Benedict, pastor of Calvary, introduced the featured speaker, **Fred Moseley**, pastor emeritus, First, Lucedale. The Richburg ensemble presented special music.

New Hope Church, Lawrence County, has purchased a bus to be used in church related activities. The first trip was made on November 27 with 33 people going to Jackson to tour the Baptist Children's Village, Metro-Center, and the Jackson Planetarium. Drew D. Blanton is pastor.

"**Keenagers**," senior adults of First Baptist Church, Playune, decorated a Christmas tree with ornaments they made by hand, and placed the tree in the recreation room of the church for use throughout the Christmas season by all groups wishing to entertain there. The tree was given by a senior adult. Director of senior activities is Mrs. J. D. Stoudenmire.

Staff Changes

Ronnie Cottingham has resigned as music minister at First, Helena, to go into full-time evangelism.

First Baptist Church of New Albany has called **Tom Sumrall** as pastor. A native of Amarillo, Texas, Sumrall is a graduate of Louisiana College, and New Orleans Seminary. He has served churches in Mississippi, Louisiana, and New Mexico and has just completed a four-year term as Southern Baptist missionary in Brasilia, Brazil.



Sumrall

He is married to the former Jane Nickey of McComb. They have a son, Eric, 15. The Sumralls were welcomed to First Baptist with a reception Dec. 6. They will move to New Albany from the missionary residence of Calvary Baptist Church, Tupelo.

Fairhaven Church, Northwest Association, has called **Don Snipes** as youth and education director.

John Joiner has accepted the call to serve as minister of music and youth at Colonial Hills Church, Southaven, in Northwest Association.

M. L. Wallace has resigned as pastor of Beulah Church, Simpson County, to accept the pastorate of Hurricane Creek Church, Marion County.

New Hope Baptist Church in Lawrence County has employed Mrs. **Kenny Wayne Tankless** part time church secretary. She, her husband and two children live near Monticello. She is the former Joan Thomas.

Dividing Ridge Church, Yalobusha County, has called as pastor **Harold Bennett** of Grenada.

Rickey Blythe has resigned the pastorate of Toccoola Church, Pontotoc County, to become pastor of Parks Church, Union County.

When it gets as dark as it can get, the stars come out.

If absence makes the heart grow fonder, some church members are deeply in love with the church.

Indian Springs Baptist Church, Laura, has exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$3,200. On Dec. 1, the closing day of the Week of Prayer, gifts totaled \$4,606.25, with an additional \$170.00 pledged. Tim Sanford, pastor, said, "I believe that the prayers offered during the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions were greatly responsible, and doubtless contributed much, to that which the church considers a real victory for missions."

The **Sixty Plus Club of First Baptist Church**, Soso, recently took a trip to Bura, La. Their pastor, Jim Beck, was bus driver and tour guide. The group toured Fort Jackson. They were guests for coffee and cake at the home of Beck's sister, Mrs. Pat Bura, and also met the pastor's sister Elaine and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Beck. Mrs. Bura invited the group to pick satsumas from her orchard.

Puckett Baptist Church recently broke ground for a new preschool and children's building. The structure will have a video room for preschool, children, and youth departments. Those taking part included: Jim Carr, pastor; Prentiss Calhoun, Building Committee chairman; Rufus Vanderford, deacon chairman; and Brent Purvis, a member of the Children's department. This new addition will help ease overcrowded conditions, the pastor said.

Prayer requests

From Togo to Taiwan, prayer requests from Southern Baptist missionaries pour in. Missionaries rely heavily on the united prayer efforts of fellow Baptists back home to provide the power they need to spread the gospel.

Malawi—Pray that God will call laymen from Christians in this country to be trained for leadership in their churches. Pray also that work among Malawi women who have expressed an interest in learning about the Bible will flourish.

Zimbabwe—Pray that housing will be available for new missionaries. Pray that the Zimbabwe Mission will be able to rent two apartments in Salisbury; buy or rent two houses in Bulawayo; rent two apartments and a house in Gwelo.

Countries with tropical climates—Pray that missionaries in these places will be immune to tropical diseases to which they are exposed. There are no inoculations to prevent many of these diseases.

Guatemala—Pray that God will continue to protect Guatemalan Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries from violence which stems from political unrest. Pray also that God will open doors for witness here.

Philippines—Pray that lay people will go to the Philippines and aid volunteers Dono and Betty Moore in a vocational training program at a refugee camp. The Moores have had to turn hundreds of people away because the number of classes they were able to offer was extremely limited.

Pinelake observes 10th

Pinelake Baptist Church in Rankin County observed its 10th anniversary Dec. 6 with a fellowship dinner and special evening service. The church was constituted on Dec. 5, 1971, after functioning for nine months as a mission of Flowood Baptist Church.

During the time of mission status there were 37 who joined the fellowship, and they were the charter members.

The church now has a membership of 605.

The mission was begun in a mobile chapel furnished by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and located at Riss Barnett Reservoir. It was established on 16 acres of land donated by Rankin Baptist Association by J. E. Pace for the purpose of establishing a church. When the church was constituted the association deeded five acres to the church.

Later the association built an assembly building on the remaining 11 acres. The church recently completed negotiations for purchasing the assembly building to use as a worship center, since the original auditorium has become too small. The association deeded two acres additional to go with the assembly building.

Lannie Wilbourn has been pastor of Pinelake since August of 1977. He is the second pastor. Gary Watkins, now of Bowling Green, Ky., was the first.

J. C. Renfro, director of missions for Rankin Association, was the speaker for the anniversary service.

Hone Board appoints

ATLANTA (BP)—The executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board appointed 40 persons to a mission service during their December meeting in Atlanta.



Marion County Jay Strack Crusade Steering Committee—seated, left to right, Stanley Haddox, B. Alfred Jones, Landis Herrin, Marilyn Fortenberry, Valton Douglas. Standing, left to right, George Lee, Clifford Smyly, Ken Jordan, Margaret Lee, Bob Williams, Wilbur Hall, Owen Lusk.

Jay Strack Crusade to be at Columbia Water Park

A Steering Committee has been selected for the 1982 area Jay Strack Crusade to be held April 25-30, 1982, at the Columbia Water Park, Columbia, Miss. Clayton Spriggs of the Jay Strack Evangelistic Association will be coordinator.

A kick-off rally will be held at First Baptist Church, Columbia on Jan. 18, at 7 p.m. On February 7 at 3 p.m. there will be a committee orientation meeting at the Calvary Baptist Church, Columbia and on April 19 at North Columbia Baptist Church there will be a meeting at 7 p.m. for the training of counselors and at 8:30 p.m. for training of ushers.

Members of the Steering Committee are: Valton Douglas, general chairman; George Lee, director of missions; Marion County, co-chairman; Bob Williams, local crusade director; Margaret Lee, secretary; J. Roy McComb, finance; B. Alfred Jones, ministerial involvement; Wilbur Hall, attendance; Marilyn Fortenberry, counseling; Clifford Smyly, follow-up; Bernie Parker, music; Bob May, park-

ing; Bob Goolsby, personal evangelism; Ken Jordan, publicity; Owen Lusk, prayer; Stanley Haddox, ushers; Don Lum, youth activities; Betty Breland, telephone; and Landis Herrin, arrangements.

Revival Results

Cliff Temple Baptist Church, (Adams) Natchez: stewardship revival; Dec. 6-9; Clarence Cutrell, evangelist; George Tarver, music director; 62 commitment cards turned in, \$68,400 pledged for next year's budget; W. G. Dowdy, pastor.

Washington (EP)—The launching of an unprecedented worldwide membership drive by Seventh-day Adventists is expected to be in full swing one year from now. The 3.8 million-member denomination hopes to add one million new converts to its ranks before its quinquennial session gets under way in New Orleans, Louisiana, near the end of June, 1985.

Devotional

God's greatest gift

By Charles Holfield, pastor, Liberty
Luke 2:1-24

God's greatest gift to men, his only begotten Son, is often overlooked at Christmas. We should focus our attention upon the supreme gift God has sent into our world to offer salvation to all who would believe. The curtain of time was drawn back and Isaiah foretold the future of God giving his greatest gift to the world.

Christmas should have a very special meaning to all of us. The virgin birth of Christ and the incarnation of God in Christ are essential to the proper understanding of the true meaning of Christmas.

There is that strange loveliness about Christmas. In this season there is probably more joy, forgiveness, generosity, and good will than any other time of the year. For a brief span of time meanness gives away to meekness; ugliness gives way to beauty; and the drive to get is replaced by the spirit and holiness.

Someone has said, "Man is almost what he ought to be at Christmastime."

Yet all of this is so short lived and temporal. The day after Christmas many of the toys are broken, trees look wilted, the tinsel is no longer so shiny, and the holly is not nearly so green.

It is a tragedy of tragedies that so few of the people of the world have related themselves properly to the Christ who was born in Bethlehem destined to be crucified and suffer, providing a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The shepherds came with haste to Bethlehem and found Joseph, and Mary, and the babe lying in a manger. The wise men came later asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

The birth of Jesus gave the world a new era dividing the past from the present and the future. His spirit and inspiration have given the world its most important paintings. His love has inspired the world's masterpieces of art, sculpture, and music. More books have been written about him than have been written about all of the Kings who have ruled from earthly thrones.

God's greatest gift to us

God has given his supernatural Son. In the fullness of time Jesus was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit to be born of the virgin Mary. Christianity is based upon this and if we reject the virgin birth, deny his substitution for us and his resurrection and ascension back to the Father, we do not have anything to offer the world to redeem lost humanity.

God has given us his Son to be crucified to atone for our sins. The prophet Isaiah devoted the entire 53rd chapter of Isaiah to foretell this. The angel told Joseph that the child of Mary was divine and would be the Saviour of the world. John the Baptist introduced him as the "Lamb of God. . ."

God has given us his Son who is all sufficient. He takes care of our past in forgiveness and meets the deepest needs of the soul because he is all sufficient.

God has given to us his best gift in his Son. We need to give our best in making this Christmastime a time of thanksgiving for God's gift to us and let there be joy, peace, and real worship this Christmas.

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Calvary, Tupelo, pledges \$1 million

Calvary Baptist Church, Tupelo, has just completed a Church Building Fund and budget campaign, pledging \$1,004,545.89 to the Building Fund and \$585,840.12 oversubscribing the \$567,000.00 budget for 1982. Calvary has a resident membership of 1,057 and reported total receipts of \$435,529.00 in 1980. John G. Armistead is pastor and Julius Thompson, on the staff of the Stewardship Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, served as consultant. The Steering Committee is: seated (l to r)—Carol Pitts, Jo Russell, Piggie Caldwell, Hollis Kinsey. Standing (l to r)—Robert Upchurch, Lonnie White, Dan Clevenger, and Henry Whitfield. Jim Threlkeld served as canvass chairman.

Bible Book Series

Miracles by the King

By Lewis Sewell, Oxford
Matthew 14:1-46

This section of scripture deals primarily with certain miracles of Jesus. The point is to show that the miracles of Jesus met human need and brought acknowledgement by the disciples that He was the Son of God.

I. Death of John the Baptist (14:1-12.)

The explanation of the death of John the Baptist is tied closely with Jesus' withdrawal from the territory of Herod Antipas. John's death took place apparently some time before the time of Jesus' return to Nazareth (13:53-58.) Verse 13 alludes to Jesus' hearing of Herod's assessment of Him or John resurrected.

The disappointment of the populace that Jesus was not the kind of Messiah they were looking for, and their lack of insight into the nature of His Person and work, led Jesus to adopt the parabolic method of teaching when confronted by crowds, and to confine His direct teaching to His disciples. Matthew proceeds to show that it was His final rejection at Nazareth and the fear aroused in Herod Antipas the tetrarch of Galilee that in Jesus he was confronted once again with John (he imagined that he was rid of him forever when he had him beheaded) that led Jesus to withdraw from the domain of Herod and concentrate His attention, for the most part, upon the instruction of His disciples.

Jesus had opened His Galilean ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth and had been forcibly ejected. On His present return after a long interval, His teaching intensified the curiosity of His listeners but failed to win their confidence. They saw Him simply as the carpenter's son. They could not understand His power. Therefore, they rejected Him.

Jesus left and went "by ship into a desert place." This phrase describes the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee which was territory governed by Philip, the brother of Herod Antipas. Jesus wanted to avoid for the time being a public clash with Herod because such an encounter would probably stop short His ministry.

II. Feeding the multitude (14:13-21)

When Jesus landed on the northeastern shore of the lake, probably near Bethsaida, He discovered that the crowds for Capernaum and other towns had gone on ahead of Him on foot and were awaiting His arrival. Jesus was moved with compassion toward them and felt constrained to continue His gracious work of healing. Both Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus also

continued His teaching.

Jesus was still moved with compassion for the hungry and decided to use His miraculous power to satisfy their needs. But first He brings home to His disciples indirectly the fundamental truth that He has called them to be shepherds of the new Israel which constitutes the Messiah's flock, but that they will never be able to discharge that function in their own strength. All the power necessary for "feeding the sheep" comes from Him.

The disciples' suggestion that Jesus dismiss the crowds seems reasonable. The people had no food; it was past time for supper; villagers were near where food could be bought. That, however, did not fit Jesus' plan.

Jesus asked for the available food to be brought to Him. The disciples obtained five loaves and two fish. After blessing the scanty meal, Jesus broke the fish and bread into pieces to be passed out to the crowd.

This action of Jesus was sacramental. He intended to convey the truth that the benefits that He as Messiah had come to bestow upon God's people were spiritual and not merely material. The disciples and the crowds did not understand this truth. They remained unaware that they had other needs than physical. They would gladly accept Jesus as their King, but only because He would use His miraculous powers to supply their material wants. They would not let Him be their King who would supply their spiritual needs.

After Jesus fed the multitude, 5,000 men plus women and children, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of food. Truly Jesus can supply our needs.

III. Walking on water (14:22-33.)

After the great miracle of feeding so many with so little, Jesus directed the disciples to go to the other side of the lake, or more probably a bay. Jesus had left the territory of Herod and He most likely would not send His disciples back. Jesus withdrew to the hills that overlooked the bay to pray and probably intended to walk around the shore to join His men. But the contrary winds drove the disciples' boat back to Gennesaret (v. 34).

Although the boat in which the disciples were making the crossing was some way off shore, Jesus, when He arose from His prayers, was able to see from the hillside that it was floundering in heavy weather in a rough sea, and was against a headwind. Between three and six a.m. He came towards the disciples walking over the

sea. Jesus as God's Messiah shares the power of God as the Lord of Creation and the wind and sea obey Him. The disciples, however, did not yet understand that He possessed such power and cried out in terror when they saw Him. Jesus intended them to see Him, but He did not plan to enter the boat. Obviously He wanted to teach them that though He would not always be in close proximity physically, He would always be near spiritually.

When the wind ceased blowing, the disciples recognized Jesus as Lord of wind and water. Then, they fell down in adoration before Him.

Certain circumstances arose that led Jesus to rejoin the disciples in the boat. Apparently Jesus was going to walk by them. Peter heard Jesus' voice and observed that Jesus did not intend to enter the boat; he asked for the power to come to Him over the water and presumably walk with Him to the shore. To be able to exercise that power would be a privilege. Peter started out to Jesus but failed when his courage and trust in Jesus failed. After Jesus chided Peter for his lack of faith, they both got into the boat.

IV. Miracles of healing (14:34-36)

When Jesus and His disciples eventually came to land at Gennesaret, He was recognized by the inhabitants who spread the news of His arrival over the countryside with the result that Jesus was once again confronted by a crowd of sick folk. They had such confidence that He could heal them that they asked to be allowed only to "touch the hem of his garment;" and their faith did not go unrewarded. For Matthew these healings brought the power of the dawning Kingdom to Gennesaret.

Jesse Helms wouldn't object to 'Hail Mary'

WASHINGTON (EP)—Sen. Jesse Helms, the nation's leading advocate of "voluntary" prayer in the public schools, has admitted the kind of sectarian indoctrination he would allow under the guise of "voluntary" prayer, according to Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

In debate in the U.S. Senate on November 16, Sen. Helms (R-N.C.) said he would have no objection to a Roman Catholic public school teacher writing on the blackboard the words of the "Hail Mary," a Roman Catholic prayer to the Virgin Mary, and then inviting the third grade children to join her in reciting them.



Life and Work Lesson

Freed for responsible service

By Joel E. Haire, pastor

First Church, Crystal Springs
Galatians 5:13-16, 22-25; 6:2, 7-10

Responsible service is a beautiful thing in the Christian community. It is not limited by time or occasion, but is always appropriate. Expressions of responsible service may be simple gestures that take only a few moments or they may require more time with greater personal involvement.

Recently, while attending a conference several miles from my home, I received a telephone message telling about the sickness of a family member. Immediately I made plans to go and be with that loved one. As I was leaving the church building, where the conference was held, two friends were standing in the hallway. They listened carefully as I shared with them the circumstances that had just developed. How meaningful it was when they responded with prayer. There we stood in the hallway for just a few moments sharing a prayer time. It was a beautiful thing and meant more to me than anything could have ever realized. Here was an act of responsible Christian service. It was not planned ahead of time. Rather it was a simple and significant response to a need.

We need a Christian lifestyle that responds to the needs of others about us. Freedom in Christ can provide a lifestyle freed from legalism and motivated by love. It will enable us to freely serve.

I. Serve one another (5:13-15).

Liberty is a wonderful thing when it is used in the right way. However, there is danger in the wrong use of liberty. It was never intended to be an occasion to the flesh. Apparently some took Paul's opposition to legalism as their opportunity to justify self-indulgence and sin. They were not really hearing all that Paul was saying, only what they wanted to hear. To take part of what a person said and treat it as if it were all he said is indeed an injustice and often leads to a misrepresentation of the truth. Paul would not allow his words to be so misused. He warned the Galatians that their Christian liberty could not be used as license. The only correct use of Christian liberty was in obedience to the law of love.

A right understanding and use of love bring about liberty for service. Love asks not how can I serve my own well being; not how I can be served, rather it asks about service to one

another. It sets up a new plane of living.

What a contrast love offers when compared to a devouring attitude toward one another. The best way Paul knew to describe this kind of situation was to compare it to an animal response. To bite and devour one another is more animal than human. It suggests contention of a fierce and cruel nature, its ultimate end being destruction.

When Christians choose sides and do battle there is really never a winner. Contentions always hurt the Christian cause and everyone involved loses.

II. Walk in the Spirit (5:16, 22-25).

There is a better way for Christians. Paul described the better way and with it gave a guarantee that it would work. His answer was, "... Walk in the Spirit. ... You cannot walk in the Spirit and fulfill the lust of the flesh at the same time.

A person who is walking in the Spirit shall produce the fruit of the Spirit. This fruit is so different from the rottenness that comes from a life that seeks only to fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Some of the most beautiful Christmas decorations that can adorn a table, mantle or door are made from fruit. Some of the most beautiful things that adorn a Christian's life are made of the fruit of the Spirit.

Love, joy and peace turn our minds toward God. Without him these would be impossible. Longsuffering, gentleness and goodness are necessary in our relationship to others. How much this relationship suffers without these qualities. Faith, meekness and temperance remind us of our own personal needs. These give strength and meaning to our daily lives. They add spiritual dimension to every area of life.

A spiritual life is intended to produce a spiritual walk. Walking in the Spirit follows living in the Spirit. The idea here is to move in a line or row. We are to be sure our walk is in step with the spiritual life.

III. Bear one another's burdens (6:2,5).

Paul has talked about some of the dangers in misuse of spiritual freedom. He recognized that there would be some who were guilty of such.

When another Christian is overtaken in any trespass what is to be our response? We are to recognize that he has a burden. We are to restore him in

a spirit of gentleness and while we are doing so help him bear his burdens. Our motive is to be another's spiritual good.

Bearing our own burden can be a real help to us in bearing another's burdens. Our own burden here is one of moral responsibility. The freedom we have in Christ calls us to the responsibility of doing what is right. When we realize how far short we fall as Christians it causes us to want to help another who has fallen, rather than criticize.

God's plan calls for Christians to help each other. If we do not follow God's plan then there are no other human hands that can help us. We are responsible.

IV. Sow To The Spirit (6:7-10).

When the farmer goes to his field to sow he knows exactly what he is going to reap. He will reap what he sows. If he plants corn it will never come up as wheat. This is not just true most of the time but all of the time.

When the Christian goes to his field to sow he knows exactly what he is going to reap. He will reap what he sows. If he sows to his own flesh he will reap corruption. If he sows to the Spirit he will reap life everlasting. This is not just true most of the time but all of the time.

Responsible service is good harvest material. It comes from the freedom known only in Jesus Christ. We are made free by Christ and free to serve in Christ. That is as free as we will ever need to be.

Blind Texas Baptists to get taped paper

DALLAS (BP)—Beginning in January, blind Texas Baptists will receive their copy of the Baptist Standard, journal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, on tape.

Through a special arrangement between the Standard and the church ministries section of the BGCT, a cassette tape will be provided free of charge to the blind.

Texas is the fourth Baptist convention to begin such a service for the blind. South Carolina began the program about two years ago, and now North Carolina and Arkansas provide such a taped newspaper.

Lies, like chickens, come home to roost.

SCRAPBOOK

Christmas, 1931

Christmas Joy

By Mrs. Max B. Graham

It was only a week until Christmas and money was scarce because of the Depression. That year Daddy had taken four "settin'" hens to the nearby town to sell so he and Mamma would have just a little Christmas money to buy something jointly for the four smaller children. The older five would just have to understand. Mamma had already selected one of the turkeys we had raised on our farm to be fattened for the big Christmas dinner that she was planning. On what good dressing and giblet gravy she could make at Thanksgiving and Christmas!

The older boys had already selected out the Christmas tree and it was now standing upright in the front parlor. They had picked off the peanuts and picked out the best ears of popcorn to be used in the Christmas preparations—the peanuts to parch and for candy and the popcorn to be popped and strung by the older girls to help decorate the tree. Large pine cones had been picked up in the woods and painted silver and colorful holly with red berries had been cut to be used in decorating the tops of mantles, along with pine cones and homemade candles. After we decorated the mantles, it was time to decorate the six-foot cedar tree.

The boys kept the corn popper going over the red coals of the fireplace, as the girls strung the dishpans of freshly popped corn, strung red berries they had gathered in the woods, hung

homemade paper ornaments, silver painted pine cones, and covered the tree with homemade snow made from soap flakes. A homemade silver star finished off the top of the stately Christmas tree.

Mamma spent the week cooking all kinds of cakes, cookies, candy, and pies. What an aroma from freshly baked goods pervaded our farm house. It took a lot of Christmas baking for a family of eleven, not counting all those friends and relatives who would eat at least one meal at our house during Christmas.

Snow fell all night that Christmas Eve. Each of the nine children, except the baby girl, had put out a box or hung up a Christmas stocking and one was put out also for the baby. Each child received one apple and one orange and a few pieces of bought Christmas candy plus a package of firecrackers, or a box of sparklers, depending on the age of the child. The four smaller children jointly received a bright red wagon in which the older children also enjoyed riding.

The younger children were stirring at four Christmas morning wanting to know if Santa had come, so Mamma and Daddy decided they might as well get up and let them enjoy Santa Claus. After about two hours, the entire family sat down to a bountiful breakfast thinking of that time long ago when the first Christmas was begun as the little Christ child was born in Bethlehem. (Mrs. Max Graham lives near Coldwater, Miss.)

In the little country church by the side of the road, the congregation stands to sing—"Joy To The World!"

But is there joy to parts of the world dark, sad, and wanting?

And is there joy where little children cry out for bread and warmth? Where old bones freeze and cringe from pain?

Where sorrow hangs over the door as mistletoe; and the 'lamp of life' is only a flicker!

Oh, Lord, forgive us, please! for hungry children, and bones that freeze! Help us Lord, on this—"Your Night" to light, and keep our Christmas Light!

—Roxie Barton Jones

"And knowledge shall be increased"

A miracle is a splendid thing—a Child from Heaven for a King, and God who walked the earth as man revealing life's prophetic plan. Jesus healed earth's weary race and then ascended into space through worlds the people did not know,

with promise to return for us, 2,000 years ago; and now with man in rocket ship sailing the skies beyond earth's tip, seeing myriads of worlds in mystery, how easy to believe the majesty of God, my God who personally this Christmas made a miracle for me.

—Violet Tackett, McComb

Lynchburg, Va. (EP)—Moral Majority more than doubled its annual revenue to \$5.77 million in the fiscal year that ended Aug. 31, but it had a deficit of more than \$500,000, an audit showed December 9. The audit showed that in fiscal 1980-81, Jerry Falwell's conservative political lobby had revenues of \$5.77 million—up from \$2.21 million from fiscal 1979-80.



Uniform Lesson

The greatest discovery

By Jerry E. Oswalt, pastor

Second Avenue, Laurel
Mark 8:27-29; Luke 24:25-26

John 1:35-42; 7:25-31

The people of Israel were eagerly awaiting the coming of their Messiah or Christ during the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth. No wonder it was a thrilling experience to discover that he had come. This explains the excitement of the shepherds (Lu. 2:20), of Simeon (Lu. 2:25-32), and of Anna (Lu. 2:36-38).

It was not as easy for most of the people of Israel to accept Jesus as the Christ as it had been for the shepherds, for Simeon, and for Anna. This was largely due to the obscuring of the Old Testament portrait of the Messiah in the teachings of the rabbis. They played down the Suffering Servant role and magnified the King role. Their predominant image of him was as a military-political strong man who would provide them deliverance from Roman oppression.

The passages involved in this lesson reflect the difficulty the Jews had accepting Jesus as the Messiah when he refused the popular role and adopted the servant role.

I. Peter's declaration (Mk. 8:27-29)

Jesus, knowing that his time remaining with his disciples was limited, sensed the urgency of their acknowledging him as the Christ and fully understanding and agreeing to the true nature of the work of Christ.

The general confusion about his identity among the populace is indicated in his disciples' answers to his first question (8:27-28). His major interest, though, was who they, his disciples, conceived him to be. Simon's ready confession, "Thou art the Christ," could have only pleased him more if Simon had been ready to accept Jesus' concept of the role of the Messiah (8:29). Obviously, Simon was not ready to agree to it (8:31-32).

Because of the disciples' inadequate view of the role of the Messiah, Jesus refused to let them proclaim him as the Christ at this juncture. First they had to hear and accept that he as the Christ must suffer and die (8:30-31).

People do not have to have a complete understanding of Christ to believe in him, but they do need a correct understanding of him before proclaiming him to others.

II. Two disciples' disappointment (Lu. 24:25-26)

The two on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus reflected disappointment and uncertainty about Jesus as the Christ. Their hopes that he was the Messiah had been dashed with his crucifixion. Even the word that his tomb was empty and that some believed him to be alive again had not restored their hope (24:13-21).

When Jesus joined them incognito, he accused them of being foolish, which meant unthinking or forgetful, because the very events which had deterred their faith should have enhanced their faith. They had been foretold in the prophets (24:25-26).

They, too, expected the Messiah to perform in the military-political arena rather than the spiritual.

One of the reasons for this was that the Jews had a warped doctrine of sin and of man. They did not see themselves as sinners in need of deliverance from sin through forgiveness but as oppressed people in need of deliverance from Rome through military action.

People still try to shape a Christ to fit their finitely conceived notions of needs and desires rather than to let him be himself, molding them and making them after his will. His word is as timely now as it was then, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken" (24:25).

III. Andrew's discovery (John 1:35-42)

John the Baptist used a messianic title when he referred two of his disciples to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God" (1:36).

Andrew and his companion, who may have been the disciple John, immediately followed Jesus and received an invitation to visit with him in his temporary place of residence. They probably talked at length with him about the Messiah (1:37-39).

Once Andrew was convinced that Jesus was the Christ, he excused himself and hurried off to find Simon his brother. He told him the exciting news that he had discovered the Christ and had Peter accompany him back to be introduced to Jesus (1:40-42a).

William Hull comments in the Broadman Commentary on John: "Andrew had already learned from John the Baptist (1:36-37) that the giving of testimony to Christ is never complete until the hearer has been led beyond the spokesman to the living re-

ality described by his witness. Thus he not only shared his discovery with Simon but also brought him to Jesus."

Andrew has always been the New Testament prototype of the genuine evangelist. Once anyone becomes convinced through personal discovery that Jesus is the Christ, the only proper response is to share him with others.

IV. The crowd's division (John 7:25-31)

Among the usual great throng attending the annual Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem the central subject of discussion was Jesus. The key question was "Is he the Christ?"

There was a definite difference of opinion about the answer to this question among the populace, even though the religious leadership was uniformly against him. The logic of both those who believed that he was the Christ and those who disbelieved was valid but only the conclusion of the argument of the believers was true.

The problem with the argument of those who did not believe in him was that one of their premises was false. Their argument was essentially as follows: No one knows where the Messiah is from; we know where Jesus is from; therefore, he is not the Messiah (7:27).

Their false premise was that they knew where he was from. Jesus refuted it when he said in effect "You neither really know me, nor do you really know where I am from because you do not know the One who sent me" (7:28-29). They knew his human roots but not his divine roots.

The argument of those who did believe that he was the Christ went as follows: The Christ will perform more signs than anyone; Jesus' record of signs can never be duplicated or broken; therefore, he is the Christ. Their conclusion was true because both their premises were true and their reasoning was sound.

The discovery of Jesus, the Christ is the greatest of personal experiences. The ensuing learning of him in exciting discovery after discovery of his claims upon us and promises to us is almost equally as great.

New York (EP)—U.S. News & World Report calls it "America's Golden Age of Church Building." According to the publication, a recent boom in new church building brought the value of religious construction from \$67 million dollars in 1975 to 1.6 billion in 1980.